

Greenway Committee Meeting Summary

Jan. 18, 2022

Present: Trish Garrigan, Sherry Anders, Marie Elwyn, Betsy Colburn Mirkovic, Brian Goldberg

Public present: Tim Hatch

1. **Call to Order** – Meeting was called to order at 6:32
2. **Announcements** – Sherry read the usual announcements about recording.
3. **Land Management/Acquisition** –
 - a. Great Rd/2A parcels – Anne Gagnon of MA Fish and Game still interested in 3 of 4 parcels. One parcel might be developable. We should check with Anne to see if she is still interested if there is development on one of the parcels.
 - b. Two L.A.N.D. grant opportunities – working out details with landowners and Janet Morrison, will discuss next time.
 - c. Bemis surplus land – Bemis wants to partner with the community to find the best use for the land. It is 4.3 acres of open land on 100 Ayer Road, next to the Water District, and it backs up to Spruce Street. Bemis is partnering with North County Land Trust (NCLT). Sherry, Brian and Laura Thomas (representing the OSRP Update Committee) and Mike Fleming went on a site walk and discussed possible uses of the land with NCLT. This included daylighting Trout Brook (taking it out of the pipe), conservation, community garden, affordable housing. Marie mentioned it is the area of the original farm of Ray Farrar. The committee was excited about this potential project.
4. **Housing Production Plan (HPP)** – Sarah was not present so we did not discuss. Sherry did note the Planning Board did appreciate the work the Greenway Committee did to look at the parcels in the HPP that might not be appropriate for housing due to conservation concerns. The Planning board is asking to have a Housing Committee established and would like Greenway Committee representation on it.
5. **Fredonian Park** – No word on the ADA grant. Sherry knows of 4 volunteers including 2 that live near the park and would be interested in being trained on invasives and helping with the park. Sherry is willing to put together a grant application similar to the one Pepperell had submitted to the NRWA. This grant would train a citizen group to help with invasives, and maybe have a community workshop on invasives. We would need the Select Board to submit the grant on behalf of the Greenway Committee but time is short. A motion was made by Betsy to authorize Sherry to continue with the grant proposal. In discussion it was noted that Deb Flagg might be a helpful person on the BOS to help move the grant through. Motion passed unanimously. Sherry noted that Mike Fleming has said that Shirley Charitable Fund might be able to help with money.
6. **NRWA Riparian Buffer Project** – USFS "Landscape Scale Restoration Project" is looking for two sites for a three-year **riparian vegetated buffer** project, up to 300 ft wide buffer. NRWA is looking for places along the river where tree planting is needed. Mike Fleming had a suggestion for a potential area along the Mulpus but would need to look into it. Brian wondered about the Mulpus near the Bull Run parking area. We should get any ideas to Sherry, possibly check with Anne Gagnon and Heidi Ricci for ideas.

- 7. Barrens Restoration Project** – Sherry shared some information she had gotten from Ward Baxter via Chalis Bird, Biologist with MassWildlife about the soils in the area being indicative of barrens, the lack of stone walls indicating glacial floodplain, and that logging had been done making the soils richer so the pitch pines disappeared. Sherry let the Conservation Commission know that she saw several trees marked along the river to be cut. Brian asked if there is anything for us to do on this project. Sherry noted not at this point and we are still considering Al Futterman of NRWA as the key point person.
- 8. OSRP Update** – Brian reported they have 5 on the committee. They are working on the survey and testing it, and updating data in the report. He noted that the 2017 plan is so rich and comprehensive and he felt the update would like to focus on communicating the gaps and needs to the community. They also want to explore creating a vision of something specific, like a conservation band across Town or an interconnected trail across town. Brian spoke of his experience working on the “Highline” an elevated park in New York City and how powerful it was to have a vision to get the public engaged and excited about. This could possibly be a way to revitalize the village and tie trails to economic development, and history. He mentioned having a meeting with a select group of people to brainstorm ideas and possibly sketch them out on a map, the concept of an Appalachian Trail thru Shirley to honor Benton MacKaye. Sherry noted that Benton spent much of his time in the Western Wildlife Corridor area of Shirley. The suggestion to bring in Paul Funch or Dick O’Brian to help with this idea was mentioned.
- 9. Shirley Trails** – Still need to revise Trails document and submit to Conservation Commission. Sherry gave an update that the town doesn’t need to worry about things like an old car if it is “off” the trail, it is not the town’s problem. If there is a hazard on the trail it might be a problem for the town to address. The Town can ask landowners to remove hazards. Brian noted that the public is looking to get information about trails, and parking. Trail mapping is needed and it would be good to get resources online. Groton Trails.org is a good online resource to look at. Brian noted that Jay Duffner put some maps together in a few hours. It was noted that there are outstanding questions about mapping trails on Fish and Wildlife lands, and also about posting of areas that are private property. Sherry noted the possibility of posting “Town conservation area ends here” signs instead of posting “private property, no trespassing.” Betsy mentioned an example of what to look at are the trail maps produced by Harvard Forest.
- 10. Public Engagement** – Newsletter Winter issue - interview with Marion Stoddart. Newsletter will be out soon.
- 11. Approval of Minutes** – A motion to approve the Dec. 21, 2021 minutes was made. Motion passed unanimously.
- 12. Meeting adjourned at 8:08**